



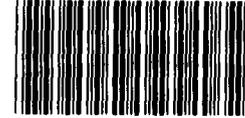
COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

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B-202135

DECEMBER 17, 1982

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget  
United States Senate



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Dear Mr. Chairman:

Subject: Updated Information Regarding Funding Gaps and  
Continuing Resolutions (GAO/PAD-83-13)

During your September 21 hearings on budget reform, you requested that we provide you with the instances and major reasons for continuing resolutions for the past 10 years. As you are aware, on September 22 we provided your Committee with information from two GAO reports on funding gaps that also discuss continuing resolutions in some depth. One of these reports, "Funding Gaps Jeopardize Federal Government Operations" (PAD-81-31, March 3, 1981), included data on the number of times funding gaps occurred and the major reasons for passing continuing resolutions from fiscal years 1962 through 1981. Your representative then asked us to (1) provide the Committee staff with an analysis of late enactment of appropriations both before and after the 1974 Budget Act was passed (see tables in the enclosure) and (2) update the report information by including both fiscal year 1982 information and reasons for the current situation.

Continuing resolutions have been used 78 times from fiscal year 1962 to the present. In fiscal year 1982, there was an impasse over the terms of the continuing resolution. In particular, its spending levels on social programs and foreign aid did not satisfy the President. This impasse caused a funding gap (one of two during this fiscal year) that in turn caused a partial shutdown of Government offices on November 23, 1981. In December, 9 of the 13 appropriations acts for fiscal year 1982 were passed, but agencies affected by 4 appropriations (Labor, HHS, and related agencies; legislative branch; State, Justice, Commerce, Judiciary, and related agencies; and Treasury, Postal, and Executive Office) operated on a continuing resolution for the entire fiscal year.

Since the continuing resolution for fiscal year 1983 was enacted the morning of October 2, this fiscal year also started with a funding gap. Only one appropriation bill had been signed into law before the start of fiscal year 1983, and again there was the possibility that serious disruption of Government operations could occur. The funding gap was caused by repeated delays

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and uncertainties in the budget and appropriations process that were beyond the control of any particular committee of the Congress. For instance, there was a heavy preadjournment workload that included debate on abortion, school prayer, and disagreement on riders.

The heavy workload that causes delays in funding stems in large part from a process that is unnecessarily repetitive, a structure and system that is unduly complex, and a level of decisionmaking that is inappropriately detailed. I think the current situation again demonstrates the need to reiterate the theme of my testimony before your Committee--the budget process needs to be simplified with an aim towards a balance among stability, control, and flexibility.

As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 7 days from the date of the report. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General  
of the United States

Enclosure

Table 1\*

Late Enactment of Appropriations Bills a/  
Before and After the 1974 Budget Act  
(As of October 1982) b/

<u>Appropriations c/</u>	<u>Late Enactment</u>				<u>d/</u>
	<u>Before Act</u>		<u>After Act</u>		
	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Agriculture and related agencies	15 of 15	100%	5 of 7	71%	
Defense	15 of 15	100	5 of 7	71	
Energy-Water (public works)	15 of 15	100	4 of 7	57	
Foreign assistance and related programs	15 of 15	100	7 of 7	100	
HUD and independent agencies e/	15 of 15	100	4 of 7	57	
Interior and related agencies	12 of 15	80	5 of 7	71	
Labor, HHS, and related agencies	15 of 15	100	6 of 7	86	
Legislative branch	15 of 15	100	5 of 7	71	
Military construction	15 of 15	100	4 of 7	57	
State, Justice, Commerce, Judiciary, and related agencies	15 of 15	100	4 of 7	57	
Transportation and related agencies f/	9 of 9	100	4 of 7	57	
Treasury, Postal, and Executive Office	<u>11 of 15</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>4 of 7</u>	<u>57</u>	
Government-wide Total	<u>167 of 174</u>		<u>57 of 84</u>		
Percent		<u>96%</u>		<u>68%</u>	

Notes to Table 1

a/Late enactment after June 30 for fiscal years 1962-76 and after September 30 for subsequent fiscal years.

b/Only two appropriation bills, HUD and independent agencies and military construction, had been passed prior to adjournment. However, the President only signed HUD and independent agencies before the beginning of this fiscal year.

c/Appropriations categories based on structure supplied by the Department of the Treasury. Excludes the District of Columbia appropriations.

d/We have included 12 of the 13 FY 83 appropriations in this category because the earliest the Congress could act on these bills would be November 29, 1982, when they come back into session. There is a possibility that these bills may be passed later in the fiscal year, or not at all.

e/HUD funded as an independent agency prior to FY 67.

f/Transportation and related agencies' appropriation bill came into existence in FY 68.

\*The figures in this table will vary from the table outlined in the GAO report entitled "Funding Gaps Jeopardize Government Operations" (PAD-81-31) March 3, 1981, because the information has been updated and adjusted based on further analysis.

Table 2\*

Late Enactment of Appropriations Bills a/  
Before the 1974 Budget Act  
(FY 1962-1976)

<u>Appropriations b/</u>	<u>Late</u>		<u>Stratification of Late Appropriation Bills</u>				
	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Less than 1 month</u>	<u>1-3 months</u>	<u>3-6 months</u>	<u>6-9 months</u>	<u>9-12 months</u>
Agriculture and related agencies	15 of 15	100%	1	5	9	--	--
Defense	15 of 15	100	--	4	8	3	--
Energy-Water (public works)	15 of 15	100	--	6	9	--	--
Foreign assistance and related programs	15 of 15	100	--	1	6	6	2
HUD and independent agencies c/	15 of 15	100	1	6	8	--	--
Interior and related agencies	12 of 15	80	4	5	3	--	--
Labor, HHS, and related agencies	15 of 15	100	--	5	6	3	1
Legislative branch	15 of 15	100	6	5	4	--	--
Military construction	15 of 15	100	--	6	8	1	--
State, Justice, Commerce, Judiciary, and related agencies	15 of 15	100	--	5	10	--	--
Transportation and related agencies d/	9 of 9	100	--	5	3	--	1
Treasury, Postal, and Executive Office	<u>11 of 15</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>--</u>
Government-wide Total	<u>167 of 174</u>		<u>15</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>
Percent e/		<u>96%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>2%</u>

Notes to Table 2

a/Late enactment after June 30 for fiscal years 1962-76 and after September 30 for subsequent fiscal years.

b/Appropriations categories based on structure supplied by the Department of the Treasury. Excludes the District of Columbia appropriations.

c/HUD funded as an independent agency prior to FY 67.

d/Transportation and related agencies' appropriation bill came into existence in FY 68.

e/Any difference in the percentage is due to rounding.

\* The figures in this table will vary from the table outlined in the GAO report entitled, "Funding Gaps Jeopardize Government Operations" (PAD-81-31) March 3, 1981, because the information has been updated and adjusted based on further analysis.

Table 3\*

Late Enactment of Appropriations Bills a/  
 (FY 1977-1983)  
After the 1974 Budget Act  
 (As of October 1982) b/

<u>Appropriations c/</u>	<u>Late d/</u>		<u>Stratification of Late Appropriation Bills</u>				
	<u>Total Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Less than 1 month</u>	<u>1-3 months</u>	<u>3-6 months</u>	<u>6-9 months</u>	<u>9-12 months</u>
Agriculture and related agencies	5 of 7	71%	1	4	--	--	--
Defense	5 of 7	71	1	4	--	--	--
Energy-Water (public works)	4 of 7	57	1	2	--	--	1
Foreign assistance and related programs	7 of 7	100	3	2	--	--	2
HUD and independent agencies e/	4 of 7	57	1	3	--	--	--
Interior and related agencies	5 of 7	71	1	4	--	--	--
Labor, HHS, and related agencies	6 of 7	86	1	1	--	--	4
Legislative branch	5 of 7	71	1	1	--	--	3
Military construction	4 of 7	57	2	2	--	--	--
State, Justice, Commerce, Judiciary, and related agencies	4 of 7	57	1	1	--	--	2
Transportation and related agencies f/	4 of 7	57	1	3	--	--	--
Treasury, Postal, and Executive Office	4 of 7	57	1	1	--	--	2
<b>Government-wide Total</b>	<b><u>57 of 84</u></b>		<b><u>15</u></b>	<b><u>28</u></b>	<b><u>--</u></b>	<b><u>--</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
<b>Percent g/</b>		<b><u>68%</u></b>	<b><u>18%</u></b>	<b><u>33%</u></b>	<b><u>--</u></b>	<b><u>--</u></b>	<b><u>19%</u></b>

Notes to Table 3

- a/Late enactment after June 30 for fiscal years 1962-76 and after September 30 for subsequent fiscal years.
- b/Only two appropriation bills, HUD and independent agencies and military construction, had been passed prior to adjournment. However, the President only signed HUD and independent agencies before the beginning of the fiscal year.
- c/Appropriations categories based on structure supplied by the Department of the Treasury. Excludes the District of Columbia appropriations.
- d/We have included 12 of the 13 FY 83 appropriations in this category because the earliest the Congress could act on these bills would be November 29, 1982, when they come back into session. There is a possibility that these bills may be passed later in the fiscal year, or not at all.
- e/HUD funded as an independent agency prior to FY 67.
- f/Transportation and related agencies' appropriation bill came into existence in FY 68.
- g/Any difference in the percentage is due to rounding.
- \* The figures in this table will vary from the table outlined in the GAO report entitled, "Funding Gaps Jeopardize Government Operations" (PAD-81-31) March 3, 1981, because the information has been updated and adjusted based on further analysis.

Table 4Funding Gaps in Federal Appropriations  
Between FY 1968 and FY 1983Major Causes of Delay

- 1983 Heavy preadjournment workload, including debate on abortion, school prayer, and disagreement on riders.
- 1982 November 21-23--Impasse over the terms of the continuing resolution, particularly its spending levels where it did not cut enough from social programs or add enough for foreign aid to satisfy the President. October 1--Result of disagreement over riders regarding compensation of members, including congressional pay increases, tax deductions, and honoraria limit for Senators.
- 1981 Sixteen-hour gap result of disagreement on riders, busing, abortion, and congressional pay increase.
- 1980 Congressional pay increase, abortion, Federal Trade Commission authority, and various riders.
- 1979 Abortion, public works water projects, and delays in passing authorizing legislation.
- 1978 Abortion and D.C. convention center.
- 1977 Heavy preadjournment workload created by abortion issue.
- 1975 U.S. military aid to Turkey.
- 1974 Allocation of funds to States and localities for educational aid to the disadvantaged.
- 1973 Impoundment and reconstruction aid for North Vietnam.
- 1972 Foreign aid authorization, policy for withdrawing troops from Indochina, and aid to Cambodia.
- 1970 Major delays in enacting appropriations bills and Federal spending and inflation issues related to Labor-HEW appropriations.
- 1968 Presidential request for a 10 percent surtax and proposed cuts in Federal spending.

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